

SILVER MEN CAUCUS.

Indications Now Seem to Point to Comparative Peace.

BANKHEAD MAKES A PROPOSITION

Which the Silver Men Endorse and Anti-Silver Men Favor.

PROSPECT OF THE NATION'S CAPITOL.

Work Ahead for the House—The Talk of Pushing Up in Three Weeks—What Georgians Are Doing in Washington.

Washington, August 9.—(Special.)—Again the factions have apparently gotten together and are ready to proceed to battle fairly on the silver question and the repeal of the Sherman law. But how long the agreement will last is an open question. Indeed, it is very squally weather here politically tonight. One day the skies appear bright and smooth sailing seems in sight; the next there are clouds and thunder roars about on all sides.

The silver caucus called for noon today at the house was fairly well attended. It was not a democratic caucus, but a caucus of all advocates of free coinage. Many free coinage democrats declined to go on the grounds that they preferred not to attend a general caucus of democrats, republicans and populists. Only Messrs. Livingston and Moses of the Georgia delegation attended. There were about ninety democrats, six populists and three or four republicans present.

It lasted several hours. Everybody seemed to talk and almost every one did talk.

Colonel Oates, of Alabama, was the first. He made a few strokes at the president's message and then endeavored to have the caucus agree upon a bill containing the repeal of the Sherman law, free coinage of silver and the repeal of the tax on state banks, but his proposition was ruled out on the ground that it was best not to compound other things with the coinage of money right now.

Then Mr. Bryan, of Nebraska, spoke upon a message, declaring that the adoption of the repeal of the Sherman law would mean war, pestilence and famine to the country. He believed Mr. Cleveland was honest in his expressions, but he did not know.

Jerry Simpson attempted to criticize Mr. Cleveland, but was quickly squelched by Mr. Bailey, of Texas. All the while the caucus talked about at random for a time. The conservative men sat quietly listening.

Mr. Bankhead's Proposition.

Finally when all the sky-scraping rockets had been fired, the bombs had been exploded and the smaller firecrackers had been popped, when the prototypical display of Mr. Bankhead had been in close combat when the Alabama arose and explained the situation. He told of the conference he and others had had with the anti-silver men on Monday evening and suggested that the caucus appoint a committee of five to confer with the anti-silver men and propose this plan for settling the financial question:

The introduction of a free coinage bill by Mr. Bankhead tomorrow; the ratio of silver to gold in the bill to be the same as the present—16 to 1; then other bills and amendments from the national committee follow. Three weeks from the purchase of the Sherman law, the ratio of 16 to 1. If the vote is down 17 to 1 and so on, a bill will be adopted. Anything else germane might be offered should be voted upon without filibustering. Finally if free coinage was voted down, a bill similar to the one Mr. Bankhead should be voted upon. If that fails, all other silver propositions failed, then a vote should be had on the unconditional repeal of the Sherman law.

The proposition as Mr. Bankhead explained simply means a square and open fight, all sides agreeing not to filibuster, or behind closed doors, but to let the settlement of the matter so to the strongest side. It was adopted unanimously, and a committee composed of Messrs. Bankhead, Culberson, Bland, Bryan and Lane, of Illinois, were appointed to confer with the anti-silver men.

At the close it was officially announced that the following resolution offered by Mr. Bland, of Louisiana, had been adopted by a unanimous vote:

Resolved, That we will support a bill repealing the purchase clause of the Sherman act and concurrently providing for the free and untrammelled coinage of silver with legal tender quality on such a ratio as will provide and maintain the parity between gold and silver.

Besides the action reported a motion by Mr. Bland was adopted authorizing the appointment of a committee of "whips," one from each State, whose duty it shall be to canvass the house and discover each member and standing upon the proposed bill and see that every friend of the measure is in his seat and ready to vote when the time comes. This committee has not yet been named.

Believed to Be Acceptable.

The proposition is believed to be acceptable to the anti-silver men, but it is not the same as that made by Bourke Cockran on Monday afternoon. The conference of the committee of the two elements will be held at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning and should they agree, the fight will open tomorrow. The difficulty in the way is that some of the anti-silver men present today may object to the agreement and kick out of the traces, or that some rank and file man may refuse to follow Cockran, Tracey and Raynor, and attempt to force a vote on unconditional repeal at once.

Indeed there are hundreds of obstacles that may appear in the path of an agreement upon a plan of battle, consequently predictions as to just what will occur are apt to be wrong than right. But as it is tonight, there seems to be a strong disposition on both sides for a square and fair contest.

If that comes, the indications are that the Sherman law will be repealed without

other legislation in advance, though not until an agreement has been reached by which a fair fight is to be had on substitute legislation later. My authority for this is the one of the strongest free coinage men in the house. He has made a close roll of both sides. He thinks the president's message and other influences have caused many silver men to be willing to vote for repealing the Sherman law right now and take time and ample time to consider other legislation in order to be sure that no mistake is made, and finally to adopt something that will settle values and be acceptable to all sections and all classes of the people.

Two of the Committees Talk.

Tonight I had a talk with Mr. Bankhead about the result of the caucus. "What will be done?" he said, "no one can tell, but I think the result of our caucus today means that the fight is to open at once. It is better not to delay it. The matter should come up and fair and a square vote should be had. I shall make the best fight I can for free coinage according to the declarations of the platform. I am not wedded to any particular ratio, but I believe in silver and I believe in a square fight. With the conditions now confronting us, with eight million bales of cotton in sight and to be moved within the next five months, the country is in no condition for delay. The country expects prompt and decisive action. I think it will be the adoption of free coinage, but if we cannot get that, then we should get the best we can for our people."

Mr. Lane, of Illinois, another free coinage man and member of today's caucus committee, agreed with Mr. Bankhead. He said that the Sherman law was repealed at once, and believes an agreement should be reached which will bring about action.

The democrats of the senate discussed this afternoon upon an order of business in dealing with the message and the repeal of the Sherman law, but failed to reach an agreement.

Some Funny Talk.

It is very funny to hear old members of congress like Mr. Springer talking on the line that congress should pass financial laws reforming and entirely changing our present financial system, and adjourn within two or three weeks.

Those who have discussed the question with leading members of both houses and who understand the diversity of views and interest have no idea that any financial legislation can be adopted within those time limits. Indeed, there are many who think the 1st of December will roll around before Mr. Cleveland affixes his signature to a law dealing with the financial question. It is true the house right now is in a humor to pass a law, a ponderous, dignified and excessively slow machine when it has the work of making new laws before it. Why, there's not one senator in the chamber who is not prepared to talk when this question comes up. It is really as much a matter of the dignity of a senator to make a speech of less than one hour in length. The hour senators are the new and young ones. When the times of such men as Stewart, Teller, Jones and other decided free coinage men come up they will talk from three to six hours each. Thus a month would be a very short time for the senate to devote to a financial bill.

The house may suspend the purchasing fund, but the impression is growing that the senate may want to settle everything in one bill—repeal the Sherman law and adopt free coinage or some compromise at the same time.

Whatever is done the indications are that it will take time, and much time.

By the way, speaking of financial legislation, Senator Stewart, of Nevada, is so much interested in silver that he has prepared a bill to demonetize gold and silver. He does not expect anything to come of it. He will simply do this to have an opportunity to recite some history about the condition of affairs from 1849 to 1852. Gold in California was discovered in 1849 and in 1850 in Australia in 1850. The mines produced great quantities and the financial wisesaws of Europe became so much frightened that a committee was sent over here to endeavor to prevent the congress from passing a law that would limit the amount of more than a limited quantity of gold in the then territory of California.

They feared gold would be produced in quantities equal to the iron mines of today and the money of the old countries be made almost worthless. Silver at that time went up.

Then Senator Stewart wants to talk about the time that silver was in greater demand than gold in the country, how money was paid by brokers by shipping gold abroad and buying silver.

Senator Stewart has the history of gold and silver from the beginning of the world at his fingers' tips. He knows the financial history of every country on the globe, and he can simply tell you the time of the gold and silver of the time of the senate to tell the country what he knows.

What the Georgians Are Doing.

Senator Gordon went to the white house this morning to urge the appointment of Colonel Gansaway Harridge, of Savannah, as postmaster at Atlanta.

Major Compor was not in from his country home at all today. He is taking a rest.

